

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**  
**OF BUCKLAND BREWER PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON**  
**WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2019 AT 7:30pm**  
**IN THE PARISH CHURCH SCHOOL ROOM**

**Members Present:** Mrs Barbara Babb, Mr Andrew Hewitt, Mr George Heywood, Mr Trevor Mills, Mr David Watson and Mr Bob Wilson

**Also in attendance:** 5 member of the public and Damian Hughes of Mant Leisure

**Parish Clerk:** Mr P Blosse

<b>KEY: Actions are shown in bold blue type   Decisions are shown in bold red type</b>
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**124.    Apologies for Absence**

**125.    Minutes of the meetings of the Parish Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019:** The minutes of the meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 were agreed and signed.

**126.    Declarations of Interest**            George Heywood re item 139.a Land to the West of Tower Hill and Andrew Hewitt re item 139.b, change of use from agricultural to equestrian, Land At Grid Reference 242441 120919.

**127.    Public Participation**            Katie Adamson spoke in support of item 139.b, change of use to equestrian, saying that she had been a resident for many years and has been looking for suitable land for a long term to provide stables etc. for her horses. She said that the field in question is at the end of Northwood Lane, which is not owned by the Parish, is not maintained and is only accessible by tractors. Some work has already been done to improve the access and Katie said that she would be using a local contractor to put down hardcore.

**128.    Presentation by Mant Leisure Ltd: Adult Fitness Equipment**    Damian Hughes gave an overview of the services and equipment that his company provides. Mant Leisure is a family-run company based in Bath that has been operating for over 30 years and has worked with a number of parish councils in the south west. They provide all sorts of outdoor play equipment, including adult fitness units and they use both in-house and sub-contracted labour to install them. Installations can depend on the size of the available space, the individual needs of the client or can be developed in a 'free-format' by Mant leisure if the client prefers. Surfacing is usually rubber matting (which can get muddy) or a tiger-mulch sub-strata with a porous surface. It was suggested that a budget of £5,000 could buy about 4 units with grass matting. Damian provided copies of brochures.

**129.    County and District Councillors' Reports:**

- a. **Councillor Barry Parsons (Devon County Council):** Cllr Parsons talked about the dispute concerning the Holsworthy Agri-Business and the damage to relationships with businesses. He said there was a lot going on regarding climate change and the County had recently committed £250,000 to help tackle the problem. The County has declared it as an emergency and is employing staff to work up a strategy, which will include encouraging

businesses to get involved. There was some discussion about the failed plan to install an array of wind turbines in the Bristol Channel (due to technical problems). He would prefer to see more research into wave technology. Barry noted George Heywood's concerns about salt supplies for the coming winter and said that he would talk to Kieran Stanbury, the new Neighbourhood Highways Officer for this area. Andrew Hewitt said that better coordination was needed about which roads were being gritted. Cllr Parsons also talked about the speed sign and discussions that he'd had with Jane Lowe and officers in Devon Highways. He will keep the parish council informed of any developments. Next year's budget is high on the County's agenda at the moment. More money is going into drainage and into Children and Adult Social Services, with special emphasis on assisting isolated people. He hopes to make better use of IT to support people in their own homes. SEND (special educational needs and disability) is now fully devolved to the Counties and an extra 2% will probably be added to next year's council tax to pay for it.

- b. Councillor Phil Pennington (Torridge Council): Cllr Pennington noted the comments about Northwood Lane and said that he would look into it. He also talked about the Holsworthy Agri-business Centre and said that, as a result of the court judgement, the Council's leader has resigned. Ken James, previously the deputy, has been elected unopposed. Cllr Pennington said that Torridge Council is at present in turmoil over the issue, but that Ken James is the right person to take the helm at the moment as he has been an advocate for the Agri-Business. He could not comment any further because the issue is still subject to 'Part 2' rules of confidentiality. Phil said that Torrington continues to do well on recycling. Andrew Hewitt noted that all black bag refuse is now going for incineration rather than land-fill. In relation to climate change, the Council has a target to be carbon neutral by 2030. It has just purchased its first all-electric vehicle and is planning to plant a lot of trees. It was recognised that much more needs to be done. Phil reported that Cllr John Hart of Devon County Council has been talking to the Area Advisory Groups

**130. Clerk's Report:**

- a. Correspondence: There had been 41 items of correspondence since the last meeting. The Clerk highlighted, i) Devon Countryside Access Forum seeking new members, and ii) Cllr Barry Parsons: Free Tree Schemes
- b. Annual Meeting: Guest Speakers: The Clerk had invited Cllr Peter Christie of Torridge Council, Martin Rich of Devon Communities Together and Tom Dixon from Devon County Council as guest speakers for next year's Annual Parish Meeting. Peter Christie suggested that Cllr Peter Hames might be a more suitable choice as he is the lead councillor for Climate Change, and Cllr Hames has kindly agreed to attend. Tom Dixon has also suggested a substitute, a colleague called Emily Reed who has not yet confirmed her availability. Martin Rich has accepted the invitation.
- c. SLCC Training Seminar – 29th January 2020: The Clerk asked permission to attend an SLCC Training Seminar in January 2020, which includes workshops on 'addressing climate change' and 'ensuring websites meet accessibility requirements', at a cost of £75.00.

**131. Co-option of New Councillors:** There had been no further nominations for the three vacant councillor posts.

**132. Power for the People: Request to support the Local Electricity Bill:** An independent group known as 'Power for the People' is asking Parish, Town and Community Councils to support a Local Electricity Bill. The Bill, if made law, would empower local communities to sell locally generated clean energy directly to local customers by establishing a statutory Right to Local Supply. This is currently impossible because of the huge setup and running costs involved in doing so. The ultimate result of this would be that local communities and businesses could buy their electricity from a local energy company, and more local renewable energy would be financially viable. Communities would benefit from the revenues that new local energy supply companies would generate, such as more local skilled jobs, energy efficiency schemes and investment in local facilities. The 27 councils that have pledged their support so far includes Bideford Town Council. Deferred to January meeting.

**133. Devon Wildlife Trust: Permission Requested for a walk at Thorne Moor:** Devon Wildlife Trust has asked if they can host a local group to have a walk and talk over Thorne Moor next summer. The group make regular Tuesday evening excursions to local sites of interest and Thorne Moor is a great example of some lovely Culm grassland. Potential dates for the walk are Tuesday evenings of 14th, 21st, 28th July, from 7.00pm to around 9.00 pm. **Approved unanimously.**

**134. Referral to Head of Highways by Cllr. Parsons re Buckland Brewer's VAS:** Members noted the latest correspondence with Cllr Parsons regarding speeding in the village and the VAS.

**135. Torrington 100 Grant Scheme:** The Torrington 100 Small Grant Scheme is now open. A grant of up to £500 is available for each of the 16 villages covered under the Torrington 100 pilot project. Grants are aimed at helping communities to identify their needs and use their local knowledge to develop relevant initiatives. The application should demonstrate local need, be initiated by the people who will benefit from it and be person focused. Grants can be awarded to a village group or charity and does not necessarily need to come from the parish council, however there would need to be a body who takes responsibility for the finances and evaluation. Noted.

**136. Report from the Fields & Allotments Sub-Committee:**

- a. Identification of grass verges etc. for maintenance in 2020/21 This survey has not been done yet, but Andrew Hewitt said that it would be ready for the budget setting meeting in January.
- b. Vacant/unused allotment plots Plots 6a and 6b are both now vacant. The people on the waiting list have already turned down a half-sized plot because they wanted a larger one. **Members agreed that plots 6a and b could now be let as a single plot.**

**137. School Field Rental Agreement and Proposed Amendment to Covenant:** The County Council, on behalf of Buckland Brewer School, have now agreed the lease and they have been sent a final copy to approve. They have pointed out, however, that the s106 dated 5 July 2013 requires that the land be used as a multi-use area for school and community use and that the Parish Council concludes an access agreement with Torridge District Council to document joint use of the facility. They have therefore asked for a copy of the Joint Use Agreement or an explanation as to why one is not required. Our solicitor has suggested that the use is at the school's request and that DCC should attend to this point. The Clerk suggested that occasional community use is allowed for in the lease and that this should be sufficient for Torridge Council's needs. However, our solicitor liaised with Torridge on this point and they have confirmed that they do not require a separate agreement. Also, the solicitors for the covenantors have pointed out that the plan we were proposing to use for the lease encompasses other land, a dog leg that is not within the Parish Council's title number DN672012. This dog leg of land is registered under title number DN637051, which our solicitor believes belongs to Pearce Construction. She is checking on that point, but the Clerk has already pointed out to her that this dog-leg of land provides the school's access to the field.

**138. Members' Reports:**

Barbara Babb (i) reported that an elderly customer had tripped over a pothole outside the Community Shop and the post also still needs replacing. **Andrew Hewitt said that he would repair them both.** (ii) the shop had accepted that the Parish Council had not approved a permanent sign on the village green but asked if the Parish Council would write a letter of support for their request to the County Council to erect a larger sign on the finger-post. This was agreed and **the Clerk will liaise with the shop.** (iii) Barbara also said that parking was becoming a problem outside the chapel and asked if a 'no parking' sign could be erected. **It was agreed that this should be done and that the Parish Council would pay for it.**

George Heywood presented the Parish Council with a cheque for £2,000 for the annual turbine contribution.

Bob Wilson said that he has reported all the potholes mentioned at the last meeting.

**139. Planning:**

- a. Application: 1/0961/2019/FUL, Land to the West of Tower Hill, Variation of condition 3 (Plans Schedule) of planning permission 1/0784/2016/OUT (affecting public right of way)  
**Supported unanimously**
- b. Application: 1/1027/2019/FUL, Land At Grid Reference 242441 120919, Buckland Brewer, Change of use of land from agricultural to equestrian, creation of exercise arena and erection of stable block and storage shed for private use. Andrew Hewitt said that he was not happy that work had been started in the lane and in the field without asking any of the adjacent landowners and before the application had been approved. Hicks and Co. had advised that Northwood Lane was owned by no-one and the hedges were the responsibility of the landowners either side of it. Trevor Mills said that he was concerned at the growing number of similar cases and retrospective applications. George Heywood said that, as one of the landowners affected, he had received an apology, which he had accepted and could see

no problem with the application. Barbara Babb was also perturbed that work had started too early but otherwise had no objection. **The application was supported unanimously but the Clerk was asked to write to the Planning Department noting the Parish Council's general concerns about work starting before applications are approved.**

- c. Decision: 1/0908/2019/LBC, West Eckworthy Farm, Installation of two new ground floor windows – granted permission – noted

#### 140. Accounts

##### a. Receipts and Payments

##### i) Bank balances as at 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (£48,119.15):

- (1) Parish Council Current Account was £6,839.96
- (2) Thornhillhead Moor Account was £7,069.75
- (3) Savings Account was £34,209.44

##### ii) Fund balances as at 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019 (£48,119.15):

- (1) General Account - £21,049.40
- (2) Thornhill Head Account - £27,069.75

##### iii) Payments due (£495.78 + VAT) The following list of payments was approved:

- (1) Parish Clerk's salary, expenses and associated PAYE (November 2019): £438.15 including PAYE of £81.70
- (2) E.on, electricity - £6.63 + VAT
- (3) BT, purchase of telephone box - £1.00
- (4) DALC, Conference Fees - £50.00

##### iv) Receipts (£2,340.00)

- (1) Turbine Contribution - £2,000.00
- (2) Field Rent - £340.00

- b. 2020/21 Budget and Precept: The Clerk reminded members that the next meeting, on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020, will be dedicated to drafting the budget and recommending the precept for 2020/21. The following suggestions will be included in the initial draft to be presented by the Clerk:

- Additional hours for the Clerk to meet website compliance (15 hours) - £180.00
- Additional training hours for the Clerk for CiLCA Course (26 hours) - £312.00
- Anticipated national pay award for the Clerk (3%) - £150.00
- CiLCA Course Fees and Expenses - £300.00
- Electrically operated screen (inc. fitting) - £200
- Education Support Fund Grant - £1,500
- Cutting of grass verges - £????
- Play equipment for the amenity field
- Cleaning of BT phone box and electrical fitting for defibrillator - £250.00

**There being no further business, the meeting closed at 10:10 pm**

**Dates of Future Meetings:**

Personnel Sub-Committee – Clerk’s Appraisal, Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (6:45pm in the Parish Church Schoolroom)

Parish Council (Budget & Precept), Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020 (7:30pm in the Parish Church Schoolroom)

Parish Council (Full Council), Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020 (7:30pm in the Parish Church Schoolroom)

**Signed as a true record:**

**Chairman:** ..... **Date:** .....